

## FRENCH TROOPS ON ITALIAN FRONT TEACH NATIVES MUCH AND LEARN AT SAME TIME

WITH THE FRENCH ARMIES IN ITALY, Dec. 19.—(Correspondence of The Associated Press).—Though the French troops who have come to Italy have brought much, gained during their three years and a half of war, from which the Italians have profited and are profiting, they, themselves, are busily learning new ways of fighting, totally foreign to the modes of warfare in France, and made necessary by the altered conditions here.

One of the most spectacular, interesting and important of these is the "teleferico," which the Italians have made an almost indispensable adjunct of their mountain fighting, and which the French now use on the mountainous part of the sector they have taken over.

The "teleferico" is an aerial tramway or transportation line which, built of slender cables supported by steel towers, spans valleys, and in half an hour carries food and ammunition, even men, to heights that would require hours on foot or by vehicle.

The "teleferico" is thorough and efficient on Mount Pasubio, just to the west of Ardeno, where, at a height of more than 7000 feet, Italian Alpine and other troops have held the Austrians in check since May, 1915. In this defense the wonderful aerial tram has played its silent but important part.

The Italian military authorities, who a week earlier had permitted the correspondents accredited to the French armies to visit all the naval defenses which protect Venice and to see in detail the unique type of warfare that goes on among the lagoons and marshes between the city and the lower Piave River, granted similar permission to the Associated Press correspondent to see and study this other and unique style of fighting.

Soon after leaving the pretty village city of Schio, just south of the foothills that lead up to imposing Mount Pasubio, the broad, stone-bedded road begins to rise perilously, curving each thirty feet with sickening "hairpin" curves. Soon the cars of the correspondents refused to travel upward further over the icy roads, and were abandoned when they showed an inclination to slide backwards over the precipice.

It was then that the "teleferico" was resorted to, just as it has on countless occasions been used to bring wounded men down quickly when delay and laborious mule-back transportation would cost them their lives.

Far out over the valley to the right of the steep road, seemingly beginning nowhere and ending nowhere, and supported at long intervals by massive steel uprights resembling the towers that carry high power electric wires, were four strands of cable, and as the correspondents contemplated their useless automobiles, a tiny carriage or car loaded with sacks of potatoes came swinging dizzily along two of the strands, mysteriously working its way upward until it vanished out of sight behind a shoulder of the mountain.

"In a few moments we'll be comfortably ensconced in one of those and won't need the automobiles," said the dashing young Italian officer heading the party.

A short walk up the road led to a low wooden shed—the starting point of one of the teleferico lines that encircle Mount Pasubio from its base to its crest. And into the cars the party crept, two to a car and in a reclining position—then to be swung off into space on the first stage of the journey to the top.

There are several stages to the journey, each requiring about half an hour, and each becoming increasingly nerve-racking since the cars, which start off at a rather smart pace, slow down in the middle of the stretch, come almost to a stop, and leave the amateur traveler suspended dizzily anywhere from one to five thousand feet above the nearest jagged rock. Generally also, on the higher lines, the pause comes during a snowstorm at this season.

However the danger, according to the "old timers" who travel daily, is small. The teleferico will carry a maximum weight of over 600 pounds to each little car—and but two human beings are permitted to ride except in the case of urgent wounded, who are stowed away three to a car. The greatest danger of accident lies in "rocking the boat" as it were, agitating the car so that it might tip or rock sideways and spill one out.

The trams are supported in their hair-raising journeys by a half-inch steel cable, and are pulled upwards—and allowed to descend—by a smaller cable that runs around a huge wheel at each end of the line and that is driven by a hydraulic motor. Accidents are extremely rare.

Many of the lines, those that run upwards at the steepest angles and that have fewer steel supports, are not used by passengers but carry only ammunition and supplies. At certain times of the year the lines highest up cannot be operated by day because they are in view of the Austrian and make excellent targets, but at this season it is possible to run them constantly because of the snow and fog.

The last of the lines runs almost to the front trenches, which are hewn out of rock but which in winter are generally snowed in so that the troops embed themselves in snow trenches and live somewhat the life of the Esquimaux. At points the first positions run within thirty yards of those of the Austrians, and the warfare that is carried on is largely that of sniping and machine-gun interchange. It is quieter than at other parts of the present Italian front.

The Italians have little fear of the Austrians in the Mount Pasubio region, because of the character of the

Italian troops in this sector, who are among the finest in the Italian army. The teleferico system does not date from the war but was in part installed beforehand, and was used for purely commercial purposes, to haul up supplies and food to the settlements up in the mountains. But with the beginning of the war the tremendous advantages of the aerial transportation lines were instantly recognized, and the existing lines were increased in number as fast as possible, both in the Mount Pasubio sector, at Mount Grappa, and elsewhere.

Important as it is, however, it is but one factor in the tremendous defensive system that has held the Austrians in check for more than thirty months. The roads, those which already existed and those that have been built out of the rocky sides of the mountains, are another very important feature, especially when one considers that on their dizzy curves the high-powered, specially constructed Italian camions can haul huge loads to an altitude of more than 6000 feet.

Mules by the thousand have been imported from North and South America Spain and elsewhere, and are especially valuable because unlike the horses they seem to suffer little if at all from the bitter weather, eat little and can go for long periods without the water that is so precious at great heights.

Even dogs have been introduced and beasts of burden in the higher regions because they are very sure-footed and willing. The number of horses is negligible, most of them being used lower down for artillery. And then there always remains manpower which staggers upward with uncounted bundles of food.

The soldiers who hold the Mount Pasubio sector are a hardy lot, and the majority have been nesting in the comfortable little wooden barracks that dot the mountains for periods of from 12 to 30 months, because while furloughs are easy enough to get the transportation problems in Italy are so serious that a man coming down into the plains can get farther south to his home only with difficulty.

As compensation in part for the denied opportunity of getting home frequently and for not being able, for months on end, to enjoy the ordinary social intercourse of peace times, the men are comfortably housed and apparently well-fed. Many have been in America and speak English, and many more come from Piedmont and speak French as well as Italian.

The heavy work, such as shoveling away the incessant snow, is now being done by deserters who were sentenced to imprisonment after the German-Austrian drive but who in many cases are put at work—and find it so distasteful that they have almost unanimously applied for permission to go into the front fighting lines again.

### HOUSING QUESTION IS BEING HANDLED BY Y. W. C. A. ABROAD

"I have a temporary cot in a bath room for which I pay 16 francs, or \$3.20 a day. I have no heat, electricity, gas, plumbing facilities, drawer space or closet room. But many of the girls in this city have to sleep three or four in a bed."

Miss Perrie Jones of Wabasha, Minn., who is office secretary for the Y. W. C. A. in Paris, in a recent letter gave this glimpse of housing conditions in Paris as American women found them. It is largely to meet such needs as this that the Y. W. C. A. opened the Hotel Petrograd in that city a few weeks ago. It is a hotel run by American women for American women. Miss Mabel Little, formerly director of the dining halls at Cornell University, is to be the housekeeping director of the hotel.

Miss Blanche Geary, a British born woman, who has been the Association building expert in the erection of the Hostess House at the camps and Association buildings in this country is now managing the hotel. She writes that "We want the hotel to be the center for night life in Paris for the American girl. Not a woman in the house would want to wander through the darkened streets and many an outside girl is being drawn to the social rooms for an evening of good fun. Women are coming to the hotel from all classes of society. It also will be the place where American soldiers coming over here, can meet their women friends under proper chaperonage."

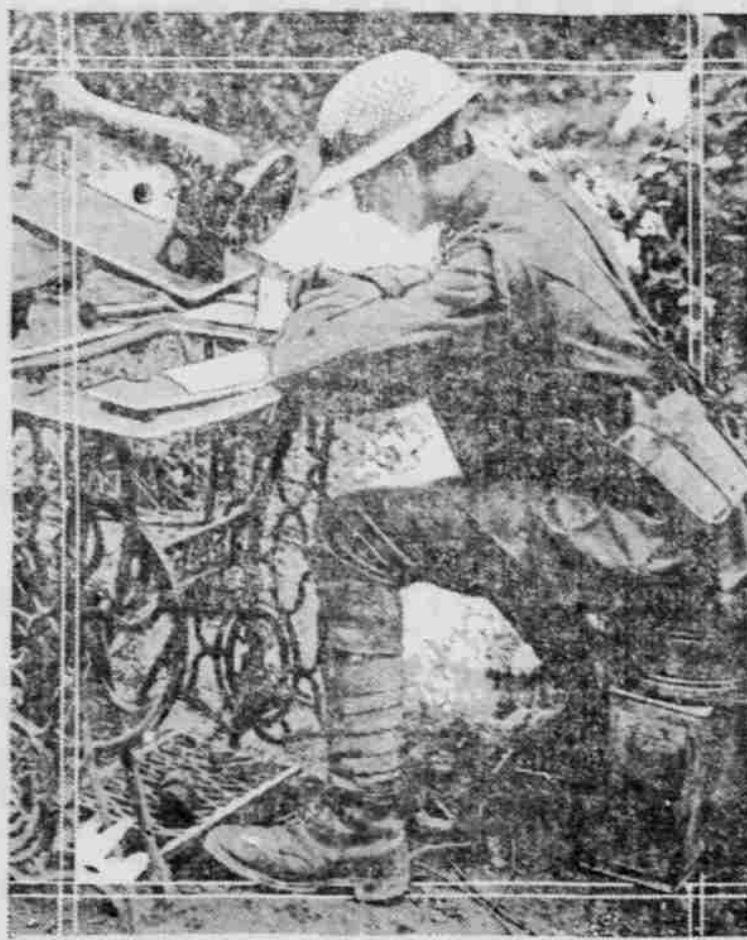
Near munition and powder factories, foyers are being opened by the Association, where hot drinks of tea, coffee and chocolate are served to the girls as they come off duty. A pleasant fire is kept burning and the place is a rest and recreation room for the workers whose work rooms and dormitories are cheerless places.

Certain of the munition work turns the skin and hair of the women yellow. Many of the workers are half sick from the bad conditions under which they work.

"I find very quick and responsive personalities behind the yellow stained faces," writes Miss Agnes Winter, of Philadelphia, who is in charge of the foyer near a factory at Lyons. "I found a woman looking over a poem the other day deciding whether she would commit it to memory. This woman is familiar with the best music and her neighbor was eager to begin the study of English."

Another Association worker, Miss Jean Cavers of Columbus, who has just reached France, where she will

### TOMMY'S OFFICE FURNITURE DOESN'T WORRY HIM MUCH JUST SO IT'S FLAT



Just a line to the folks.

Having a minute to spare from the fighting Tommy hunts himself a place to write. He looks up an office. The furniture may be anything that's hard and flat. This had a prize desk—a wrecked sewing machine. It's in a town in northern France.

### Carmen Demand Status for Union

(By Review Leased Wire) ST. LOUIS, Mo., Feb. 2.—Demands for a newly organized union of street railway employees were presented this afternoon to the United Railways of St. Louis, the local traction company and tonight the union men held a meeting to decide on a course of action in case the demands should be refused.

The union demands an increase in the wage scale of motormen and conductors from the present average of twenty-nine cents an hour to forty and forty-five cents and that the company discontinue the alleged practice of giving women conductors preference over men their senior in service in the assignment of favored runs. An adjustment of hours also is asked.

"They do not write much about war here. The oppression of it is all too heavy. In Paris it is hard to believe a war is going on but you sense it from the polls on leave or the cleaning women—surely America cannot fail the world now—is in their minds."

Miss Joloch Burner of New York City is one of the last four Y. W. C. A. representatives to reach France, getting there this week (January 23rd). Miss Burner will do recreation work and club work with the American nurses stationed near the French lines. The Y. W. C. A. is providing huts where the nurses may have a pleasant place for rest and a social hour after coming from their trying and often horrible duties in the base hospitals.

### WINS MILE RACE

(By Review Leased Wire) BOSTON, Feb. 2.—Joie W. Ray of the Illinois Athletic club was the winner of the hunter mile race, the principal feature of the indoor games of the Boston Athletic association to-night. His time was 4:24.5, one second behind the record made by Oscar F. Hedlund of this city in the running of the event in 1912.

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## AGRICULTURAL OFFENSIVE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IS SOON TO BE IN FULL SWING

(By Review Leased Wire) LONDON, Jan. 15 (Correspondence of The Associated Press).—The British war office is making plans for carrying out an agricultural offensive on an enormous scale this spring behind the British lines in France. With the cordial co-operation of the French government, thousands of acres of grass land will be plowed up, as well as some parts of the old battlefields. British soldiers by the thousands will be employed on the work, most of them being assigned to this labor during their period of reserve duty.

The food grown in this way will, if the war lasts long enough, go to help in feeding the British army. American tractor plows will be largely used in the work of turning over the ground.

The area to be tilled includes one of the most fiercely contested battle-grounds of the war. Heretofore it has been held that little could be done for perhaps several generations toward restoring these battlefields to cultivation, owing partly to the soil being "poisoned" by asphyxiating gases and high explosives, and partly to the fact that unexploded shells and grenades would make plowing very dangerous. But practical farmers do not agree with this theory. An American farmer who recently visited the whole Somme area, studying the possibilities of cultivation there, states:

"To those who believe that the land has been poisoned by gas and shell fumes, I might point out that while these fumes will fresh foliage, the effect is only temporary, rarely lasting for more than a week or two. The soil itself is not deleteriously affected."

"As to the churning up of the earth by bursting shells, I might point out that sub-soil cultivation by the use of dynamite has been practiced in America for several years. In all the world I know of no soil more likely to benefit by this process than that of northern France, underlain as it is by strata of decomposing chalk."

"Evidence of the fertility of these battlefields is found in the wealth of flowers and weeds with which they are already covered. Never under the hands of the husbandman have these farms brought forth such verdure."

"I believe that the danger from unexploded shells is practically negligible. A shell which has failed to go off at the end of a five or ten-mile flight through the air is not likely to

be disturbed by a prod from a plow. Moreover, the explosive in a shell or grenade deteriorates rapidly from a burial in damp earth. Buried barb wire must be picked up, pulled up, or cut off as it is encountered. Concrete fragments, heavy iron and the like will have to be picked up bodily and carted away."

"This leaves one problem to be solved—a practicable way of effecting the first rough cultivation."

"The first implement to be used should be a harrow of enormous strength, raking the earth to a depth of eighteen inches to two feet. It could be hauled by a 20-foot cable from a tank tractor. The next process would be a further smoothing of the ground by means of a string of tractor plows. After that the ground would be ready for the ordinary processes of cultivation."

### SHIRKER IS CALLED "MIKER" AT FUNSTON

(By Review Leased Wire) CAMP FUNSTON, Kas., Feb. 2.—When a soldier at this national army cantonment finds an excuse to avoid guard duty, or drill, or a long "hike," it is called "miking," and the person making such an excuse is a "miker." This corresponds to the shirker in civilian life.

Some of the so-called "mikers" have become past masters in the art, but a remedy has been found for every form of miking, and the men are finding it much more pleasant to participate in drills than to spend 24 hours in bed with nothing to read.

### OVERSUBSCRIBES QUOTA

GALVESTON, Tex., Feb. 2.—Galveston county is the first county in the United States to oversubscribe its monthly quota of war savings stamps, according to a letter received today by George Sealey, Galveston county director of war savings, from Louis Lipsing of Dallas, state director of war savings committee. E. R. Cheesebrough, postmaster, announced that \$124,121.65 worth of war savings stamps were sold in the county during January. The county's monthly quota is \$74,753.

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